

Virginia Saltwater Development Fund

Evaluation of a Proposal for the Development of a Research or Data Collection Project

Project Number: 0608-08

Date: 8/26/08

Title: H) Seasonal Caloric Needs and Energy Intake of Chesapeake Bay's Predatory Fishes: Which Prey Fuel Growth and Reproduction?

“The Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund is to be used solely for the purpose of conserving and enhancing finfish taken by recreational anglers, enforcing laws related to natural resource conservation, improving recreational fishing opportunities, obtaining necessary data and conducting research for fisheries management, and creating or restoring habitat for species taken by recreational fishermen.”

Code of Virginia, Section 28.2-302.3

NOTE: Please read the entire scoresheet before beginning, then provide comments, and circle () the appropriate score for each item. Thank You.

A. Problem Description and Resolution (20 points)

1. Comment on the adequacy of the problem description, background information, knowledge of available literature/data sources, and anticipated benefits.

The authors are correct in that tracing energy flows will enhance the understanding of trophic interactions and energy flows in an ecosystem. However, though this information will benefit multispecies assessment models, it should be understood and depicted that the current status of fisheries stocks are mixed, are not reflective of a balanced system, and results of this study inherently will be flawed.

2. Describe your views on the conceptual approach to solve the problem.

Conceptually, this is a good project, but is being proposed after a need has been identified from a recognized system out of balance. Results from this study will reflect current fisheries and prey availability and prey selection, but will not represent preferred prey selection. The authors must realize the adaptability of numerous predator species to shift in prey preferences due to availability and reflect that in their study design, descriptions, and ultimately their conclusions.

SCORE (Circle one)

Poor

Excellent

0

5

10

15

20

B. Soundness of Project Design/Technical Approach (25 points)

1. Is there sufficient information to technically evaluate the proposal?

Yes.

2. What are the strengths/weaknesses of the project design (thoroughness, practicality, methods, integration with other work, etc.)?

Weakness in sampling. For example, if targeting red drum for this project, how will they obtain (or will they be targeting) adult red drum, currently protected by state regulations, or will the focus only be on juvenile red drum. Weakfish is currently in historically low abundances, and look more to be a spot filler in the project than a realistic target species. Why not exchange one or two of the low abundance species with a species in great abundance in the bay, such as black drum. There is no mention of working outside of VIMS sampling programs for collections.

SCORE (Circle One)	Poor					Excellent
	0	5	10	15	20	25

C. Project Management and Experience/Qualifications of Personnel (15 points)

What is your opinion of the experience and capabilities of the Principal Investigator(s) to manage and conduct the work, the availability of facilities, and education and experience of assisting personnel.

Dr. Robert Latour is a well-known and respected fisheries scientist and analyst, and this projects relates to his previous work with multi-species ecosystem based modeling.

SCORE (Circle one)	Poor			Excellent
	0	5	10	15

D. Project costs (15 points)

Is the budget realistic and reasonable? Indicate any unreasonable costs.

Other than vessel rental fees (low cost of operation), the budget is realistic and reasonable.

SCORE (circle One)	Poor			Excellent
	0	5	10	15

E. Value of the Project to Fisheries Managers (25 points)

Do you believe the results of this project will further management of the species described? Will the results be useful to managers?

In the long term, this data would benefit the multispecies modeling approaches currently in development by various entities, to include those sponsored by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. However, the benefits will be delayed and may not be directly apparent at any time in the next few years, and most will not show benefit until 5 years or more have past.

SCORE (circle one)	Poor					Excellent
	0	5	10	15	20	25

PLEASE ADD ANY FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSALS BELOW: